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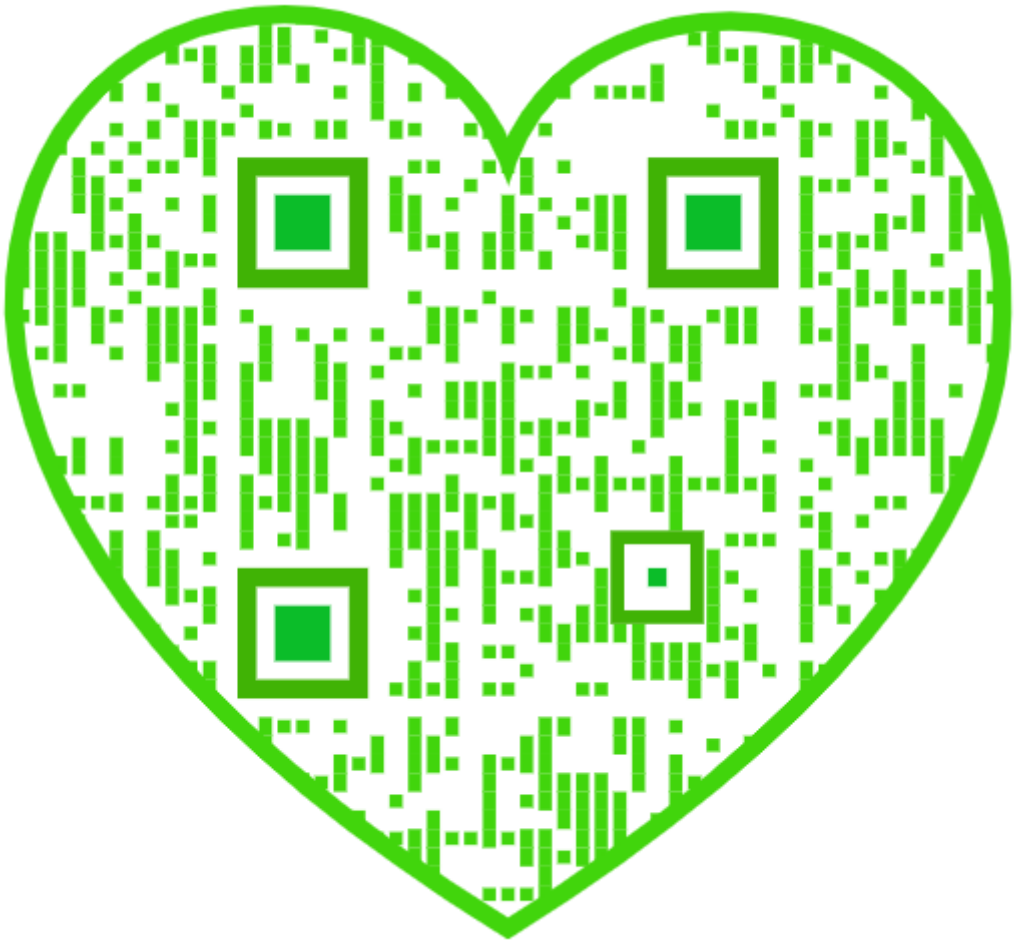
SUSAN GREGG'S CHRISTMAS ORPHANS

A
Christmas Comedy
in
Two Acts

BECKLEY-CARDY COMPANY
Chicago



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BECKLEY-CARDY COMPANY Publishers CHICAGO

SUSAN GREGG'S CHRISTMAS ORPHANS

A Christmas Comedy
in Two Acts

BY

MARIE IRISH

BECKLEY-CARDY COMPANY
CHICAGO

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.I685

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CHARACTERS

MISS SUSAN GREGG.....*A well-to-do spinster*
MRS. HINKS.....*A dressmaker*
MARY JARVIS.....*A clerk*
KATIE.....*Miss Gregg's maid-of-all-work*
HIRAM BICKETT.....*A cowboy from the West*
HERMANN KRUMM.....*A German tailor*
MR. WATKINS.....*A fat and jolly bachelor*
BOBBY.....*A newsboy*
(As small a boy as can be secured to learn the part)
PRISCILLA, BUNCH, and SLIM.....
.....*Children of the neighborhood*
(BUNCH should be short and fat; SLIM, tall and slim)
Other Christmas Entertainers if desired

COSTUMES AND MAKE-UP

MISS GREGG: Corkscrew curls; spectacles. In first scene, plain dark house dress; in old-fashioned silk or cashmere dress, with fancy collar, large cameo or other antique brooch, and some bright ribbon bows or trimming.

MRS. HINKS and MARY JARVIS: Quiet, neat afternoon dresses or suits and hats. MARY'S hair dressed stylishly.

KATIE: Plain dark dress; white collar and apron; bow for hair.

HIRAM BICKETT: Wide-brimmed hat; flannel shirt; bright-colored handkerchief knotted about neck; trousers tucked into high boots.

HERMANN KRUMM: Long-tailed coat; light or fancy

vest; large bright-colored bow tie; long, light moustache.

MR. WATKINS: Ordinary business suit; chin whiskers. Should be dressed to look fat.

BOBBY: Well-worn coat and knee breeches too small for him.

Other children: Ordinary clothes, somewhat "fixed up."

STAGE SETTING AND ARRANGEMENT

Set the back of the stage for a living-room, with a small table (on which are a fancy lamp, some books, and a plant or some flowers); a number of chairs, and a couch. The latter may be formed of some boxes put together and covered with a quilt and a fancy couch cover. For the last scene have the room trimmed with pine branches and wreaths of greens.

About four feet back from the front of the stage have a curtain which may be drawn to hide the setting of the living-room, leaving this space bare so when the curtain is drawn across the stage the space in front of it can be used for the street scene. There should also be a curtain at the front of the stage to use between the acts and at the close of the play.

SUSAN GREGG'S CHRISTMAS ORPHANS

ACT I

CHRISTMAS PLANS

SCENE I: MISS GREGG'S *living-room.*
Discovered, MISS GREGG *reading newspaper.*

MISS GREGG. Well, I declare! This certainly is an odd advertisement! But it ought to touch some one's heart at Christmas time. I do hope some kind person will answer it and help "Lonely" to have a good time! I wonder, now [*pausing thoughtfully*], if it would do for me to—why can't *I*—I wonder what Katie would say.—Some one ought to be kind to this lonely woman. [*Reads aloud from newspaper*] "*Wanted:* A lonely person who is tired of sewing would like to spend Christmas Day with some one else who is lonely, that the day may be more cheerful for both. Answer through *The Times.*" That poor woman, all alone and tired out with her dressmaking, surely ought to be given a merry Christmas! I have a comfortable home and I certainly can afford to entertain once in a while, and I 'm alone, too. Why can't I have her come here for Christmas? I don't want to spend the day alone, either.—I'll see what Katie says. [*Rings call bell.*]

Enter KATIE.

KATIE. Dear me, ma'am, ye rang that bell so excited-like, ye 'most made be drop the eggs I wuz beatin' fer the Christmas cake! Is anything the matter?

MISS GREGG. No—yes—that is—what do you think of our having some Christmas company to-morrow?

KATIE. Wy, that would be real nice, ma'am! I wuz thinkin' only yesterdy it 'd be pleasant ter have some Christmas comp'ny, bein' as ye 've plenty o' room an' lots ter eat.

MISS GREGG. I thought I 'd like to invite this woman to spend the day with me. [*Hands paper to* KATIE, *who reads notice aloud.*]

KATIE. Sure, it 'd be fine ter ask 'er! I s'pose she 's livin' in a hall bedroom in a boardin'-house, with no one ter say, "Merry Christmas," to 'er all day. I 'll bake up lots o' good things ter eat if ye want 'er ter come, ma'am.

MISS GREGG. Thank you, Katie! I 'll send the reply to this notice to-day.

KATIE. An I 'll git at the work. [*Cheerily*] There 'll be plenty ter do, with comp'ny comin'. [*Exit.*]

MISS GREGG. I 'll write the reply now, so I can take it to the newspaper office when I go shopping this morning. [*Gets out paper and pencil.*] I hope she 's nice! But we ought to be kind to every one on Christmas Day and it won't hurt me to give her a good time, even if she 's ugly and cranky. [*Sits at table and writes, then reads aloud*] "The person who is lonely is invited to spend Christmas with another who is lonely and enjoy a merry day. Seventy-two Walnut Street." There! Maybe I 'm foolish, and she may not come, after all, but we 'll get ready for her. Why, I 'm really excited about it! I did n't know it would seem so pleasant to be planning to have company. I 'll go and help Katie. [*Exit.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE 2. *A street.*

Enter BOBBY, *with armful of newspapers.*

BOBBY. Gee, I hoped I could sell a lot o' papers ter-day! A feller wants a little cash at Christmas time, dough it don' matter so much 'bout me, 'cuz I 'm all alone. Ef I jes hed a fam'ly like Humpy 's got, so 's dere 'd be somebody ter buy sump'n fer, I 'd like it. It 's awful tough bein' all alone at Christmas! Wisht I had some folks, I do! [*Looks around.*] S'pose I may 's well read a little, till business gits lively. [*Standing L, looks through paper, reading here and there.*] Oh, gee, listen ter dis! [*Reads aloud haltingly*] "De person who is lonely is invited ter spend Christmas wid anodder who is lonely and enjoy a merry day. Seventy-two Walnut Street." Say, I bet a cent an' a quarter dat 's de kind old feller I heard 'bout who gits up a swell dinner fer a lot o' folks on Christmas. I 'm goin' dere an' hev a good time, sure 's my name's Bob! I kin buy a noo necktie an' de old feller won't mind ef my clothes *is* sort o' seedy. [*Brushes coat with hands.*] I ain't never went to a Christmas party, but I bet I 'll hev a swell time, all right!

Enter MRS. HINKS, *R.*

MRS. HINKS. Oh, there is my little newsboy. He seems rather forlorn—I wonder whether he has some one to spend Christmas with or, like me, is all alone. [BOBBY *turns and sees her, then hurries toward her.*]

BOBBY. Paper, lady? All 'bout de fire on Grand Avenoo! Paper?

MRS. HINKS [*smiling*]. Yes, I think I must have one. [*Takes paper and pays for it.*]

BOBBY. Tanks, lady. [*Exit.*]

MRS. HINKS [*looking about*]. I wonder where the boy is

who blacks my shoes. He usually is here at this time. I 'll wait for him. [*Opens paper and glances through it.*] Does n't seem to be any news to-day. There 's not much to read but Christmas advertisements. Oh, dear, I wish I had some one to spend Christmas with! I 'm so tired of sewing, week in and week out, and never a soul to visit with! It 's hard to be all alone in the world. [*Reads paper.*] Well, of all things! This must be meant for me. [*Reads Miss Gregg's notice aloud.*] Seventy-two Walnut Street—that is near where I board and I 've often noticed the lady who lives there. How lovely! I certainly will spend Christmas with her, the dear, kind soul!—Well, the bootblack does n't seem to be coming, so I 'll go [*Exit, dropping paper.*]

Enter HIRAM BICKETT, *who strolls up and down, hands in pockets.*

HIRAM [*gloomily*]. Wal, I 'll be ding-busted ef the city ain't the lonesomest place I 've ever set foot in! I been here fer three days an' they ain't nobody said how-de-do to me yit! Out in the desert, in the West, folks is sociable, ef they *ain't* very many uv 'em. Might think I wuz a hoss-thief er a coyote, the way nobody gives me a pleasant word! Hang me ef I would n' take the fust train back west ef it wuz n't fer that business deal I gotter wait on. An', hang-ding it all, ter-morrer 's Christmas an' nobody ter gimme the glad hand er wish me merry! Merry Christmas! I 'll eat my stirrups ef anybody in this big town cares whether I 'm merry er not! I 'm tired o' goin' ter shows. S'pose I may 's well hike ter my room an' set there, seein' they 's no one ter talk with. Wisht Long John er Carrot Pete wuz here! I gotter notion ter lasso somebody er snap off my six-shooter a few times

jes ter 'tract attention. [*Picks up newspaper.*] Mebbe I kin find somethin' here ter read. [*Looks through paper.*] I don' care much 'bout city news; they ain't no excitement to it.—Wal, hamstring my hide ef this ain't a corker! [*Reads aloud Miss Gregg's notice.*] Say, I bet that wuz writ jes fer me! An I know who done it, too, by ginger! When I wuz tryin' ter chaw my dinner yesterdy, in that there restyrant, I tol' the waiter I wuz so lonesome I could n' eat an' they wuz 'n old man settin' near whut heard me. He wuz 'n old feller with white whiskers an' a real kind face an' I bet he 's thought it over an' felt so sorry fer me he 's invited me ter his shack fer Christmas. Now ain't that nice! Whut ef I had n' looked at this here paper? Be I a-goin'? Wal, I jes guess *yes!* I 'm goin' ter hit the trail right now an' buy 'im a box o' candy fer a Christmas present. Whoopee! [*Exit in haste, almost colliding with* MARY JARVIS.]

Enter MARY.

MARY [*turning to look back at* HIRAM]. Dear me, what a hurry that man was in, and how happy he looked! I think he must be going to have a merry Christmas. Well, this morning I might have envied him, but to-night I 'm happy, too. Clerking is n't very amusing work for a girl who is a stranger in the city and who is homesick for the folks back on the farm, and I did n't know how I was going to stand Christmas here alone; but I just happened to see an invitation in the paper and I 'm going to accept it. [*Pulls newspaper from handbag and reads Miss Gregg's notice aloud.*] Now, if that is n't meant for me, I want to know it! One of the girls in the store said she heard there were a nice old man and his wife whose children were all married and they were all alone and they

did this because they were so lonely at Christmas time. I know they 're just lovely old folks and I 'll have a beautiful time with them. My Christmas will be merry, after all. [*Exit.*]

CURTAIN

ACT II

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

SCENE: *Miss Gregg's living-room. Discovered,* MISS GREGG *seated in rocker and* KATIE *standing near her.*

MISS GREGG. I do hope our company comes early! I 'm so anxious to see what she looks like that I can hardly wait, but I know she is nice. Is everything all right, Katie?

KATIE. Lan' suz, ma'am! the house is clean ez a whistle an' I 've got stuff enough baked up ter feed a dozen folks; an' it 's good, too, ef I do say it myself! I don' know whut more the woman could expect uv us.

MISS GREGG. I hope she is a real good talker. I like to have people talk.

KATIE. I hope she 's a good eater! I like ter see folks eat like they wuz hungry when I 've got lots cooked up. [*Knock is heard.*]

MISS GREGG. Oh, Katie, I believe she has come! You go to the door. [*Exit* KATIE.]

Reënter KATIE, *followed by* HERMANN KRUMM.

KATIE. Here 's a gentleman ter see ye, ma'am.

MISS GREGG [*looking at him in surprise as she rises*]. How-do-you-do!

KRUMM [*smiling broadly as he comes forward and takes her hand*]. Ach, goot tay, goot tay, merry Christmas, goot laty! I pin so happy to meed you, ya; unt mine heart iss so glat dat I haf de bleasures to spent Christmas mit you. [*Shakes her hand vigorously.*] Mine

gracious, I pin so lonesome—all der time sew, sew mit der neetles! Bud now ve shall haf von merry Christmas, ain'dt it? Ya, it iss so goot off you to answer mine leedle notice in der baper unt say ve shall haf Christmas togedder.

MISS GREGG [*looking much confused*]. Ye-es, I—that is, ye-es—won't you sit down? [*Aside*] Oh, heavens! A man! How can I ever stand a man here for Christmas dinner? I—I shall faint! [*She and* KRUMM *sit down.*]

KRUMM. Ya, I pin von dailor unt I ged me so tiredt off der neetles unt alvays sewing. Bud now ve shust haf von merry Christmas, like ve pin alvays der goot friendts, ain'dt it?

KATIE [*who has stood staring from one to other*]. We 're dreadful glad ye come, mister. [*Aside*] Lan' suz! poor Miss Gregg is so shocked, she don' know whut ter do! She 's scairt o' men an' I don' know how she 's goin' ter git through this day. Lucky thing I 'm here. I like men, an' he seems real nice.

MISS GREGG [*nervously*]. Katie, you—you might bring in some apples or—something. [*Aside*] Oh, heaven help me! What shall I do with him! What can I say to him! [*Knock is heard.*] Oh! Katie, will you go to the door? [*Exit* KATIE.] It 's—it 's a pleasant day, sir!

Reënter KATIE, followed by MRS. HINKS.

KATIE. A lady ter see ye, ma'am. [KRUMM *rises.*]

MISS GREGG [*with relief as she rises*]. Oh, how-do-you-do! I 'm *so* glad to see you! [*Aside.*] I don't know what she wants, but I 'm glad she 's here, so I shan't be alone with this man.

MRS. HINKS [*shaking hands with* MISS GREGG]. I can't tell you how glad I am to spend Christmas with you!

It was *so* lovely of you to put that notice in the paper! I was so lonely! I felt I *could n't* spend Christmas alone.

KRUMM [*pleasantly*]. Ach, so! Den I pin nod der only von as iss lonesome at Christmas. Ve shall haf a leedle pardy, ain'dt it?

MRS. HINKS [*looking at him haughtily*]. Sir, I do not know that I care to spend Christmas with you! My father was an Englishman and my mother was French, and I do not feel very kindly toward the Germans at present.

KRUMM. Nein, nein, do nod so say! Me, I like efrypodys unt on der merry Christmas Tay ve should all pin friendts. Come, led der bast pin pygones unt ve vill haf von goot dime, alreaty yet.

MISS GREGG [*to* MRS. HINKS]. Oh, yes, please forget he is German! I want you to have a merry Christmas with me. [*Aside*] The poor man seems very nice and I can't bear to have him disappointed.

KATIE. Sure, now, Christmas is a day o' peace an' good will an' every heart should be filled with kindness, so let 's not have any hard feelin's. [*Aside*] That man looks ez if he 'd be a splendid eater an' he shan't go home till after dinner. An' he 's real nice, I 'm sure.

MRS. HINKS [*heartily*]. Very well, sir, we will be friends! [*Holds out her hand.*] I will even help you sing "The Watch on the Rhine."

KRUMM [*taking her hand*]. Nein, nein, I vill helb you sing der Marseillaise! [*They shake hands heartily, while repeating*]

KRUMM. Ye sons off Franee, avake to glory! all hearts resolvedt on liperty or deat'!

MRS. HINKS. Dear Fatherland, no fear be thine, firm stands the guard along the German Rhine.

KATIE: Now, we 'll sure have a splendid time ter-day, since peace is declared! [MISS GREGG, MRS. HINKS, *and* KRUMM *sit.*]

MRS. HINKS. Well, I certainly don't want to miss my merry Christmas. [*Aside*] He seems real nice, after all. [*A knock is heard.*]

KATIE. Lan' suz! Is there some one else comin'? [*Exit.*]

MRS. HINKS. I did n't know there was to be any one else here, but it is very pleasant to have a party.

Reënter KATIE, *followed by* MARY JARVIS.

KATIE. A young lady ter see ye, ma'am. [MISS GREGG *rises, looking surprised.*]

MARY [*shaking hands with* MISS GREGG]. Oh, I just can't tell you how happy I was to find your notice in the paper and know I did n't have to spend my Christmas alone! [*Looks at others.*] I wish you all a merry Christmas!

KRUMM [*rising and bowing low*]. A merry Christmas, young laty, a merry Christmas! [*Aside*] Ach, shtill some more come, unt all lonely! Bud me—how shall I shtant it mit so many laties? [MISS GREGG, MARY, *and* KRUMM *sit.*]

MRS HINKS [*to* MARY]. Merry Christmas! [*Aside*] She must have thought that notice was meant for her. How strange! [*Knock is heard.*]

MISS GREGG. Oh, Katie, perhaps some one else has come! [*Aside*] I hope we 'll have enough to eat! [*Exit* KATIE.] I am so glad you are all here!

Reënter KATIE, *followed by* HIRAM BICKETT, *carrying a large box.*

HIRAM [*heartily*]. Merry Christmas, everybody, Merry Christmas! [*Looks in surprise at* KRUMM, *who has*

risen.] Wal, sir, ye ain't the man I expected ter see, but I 'm glad ter be here, jes the same. [*Shakes hands with him and hands box to him.*] I brought ye a Christmas greetin', friend. I tell ye, ye jes saved my life by askin' me here fer Christmas! I 'd a-bin plumb dead o' lonesomeness by night ef ye had n't, ding-bust my boots ef I would n't! [*Turns to* MISS GREGG, *who rises, while* KRUMM *puts box of candy on table.*] I s'pose this is yer wife. Glad ter meet ye, ma'am. [*Shakes hands.*]

MISS GREGG. Oh, no, no! I 'm not his wife! Oh, really no! [*Aside*] What a *terrible* mistake! [*Sits down, looking very anxious.*]

HIRAM [*cordially*]. No matter, ma'am! Jes my mistake! [*To* MRS. HINKS] I s'pose, then, you 're his wife. Glad ter know ye—I am, by ginger! [*Shakes hands.*] Tickled ter death ter spen' Christmas here an' have a chance ter talk with somebody. [MRS. HINKS, *who has half-risen, sinks back in chair.*]

KRUMM. Nein, nein! She iss not mine vife! I haf no such habbiness. [*Sits down beside* MRS. HINKS *and talks in aside to her.*]

HIRAM [*aside, looking at* MARY]. Gee, this is some swell young lady! I hope *she* ain't the old codger's wife! [*Shakes hands with* MARY.] Merry Christmas, Miss! Glad ter meet ye. Pleasure 's all mine—'t is, by heck! [*Sits beside her.*]

KATIE [*aside*]. My, ain't he grand! I bet he kin eat lots.

MISS GREGG [*aside*]. Dear me! I wonder how many more will come!

MARY [*smiling at* HIRAM]. I 'm sure we 're going to have a lovely Christmas party.

HIRAM [*to* MARY, *anxiously, while others talk among themselves*]. Say, you ain't his wife, be ye?

MARY. Certainly not! I 'm waiting for the *right* man to come along.

HIRAM. Say, how 'd ye like one fer a Christmas present?

MARY. Oh, so often our Christmas presents don't suit us, you know, and I 'm real particular about getting a man to suit me.

HIRAM [*aside, gloomily*]. Jes my luck, by heck! The women never do seem much struck on me.

KRUMM. Vot a bleasures to pin here mit so many friendts on Christmas! Pooty soon ve blay some games, ain'dt it, like der Buss-in-a-Corner.

HIRAM. Say, when I wuz a boy we used ter play some dandy kissin' games! [*Knock is heard.*]

KATIE [*aside*]. I hope this is another one—the more the merrier ez long ez the food lasts! [*Exit.*]

HIRAM [*in loud aside to* MARY]. I don' care who else comes, long 's you 're here.

MISS GREGG [*aside*]. Oh, I *do* hope it is n't another man!

Reënter KATIE, *followed by* MR. WATKINS.

MR. WATKINS [*genially*]. How-do-you-do, Susan! [*Shakes hands with* MISS GREGG, *who has risen.*] Merry Christmas! I just thought I 'd run over to wish you a merry Christmas; but I did n't know you were having a party. [*Looks around.*] Why did n't you invite me? That 's a nice way to treat an old friend! Well, are n't you going to introduce me to your guests? [*To others*] Merry Christmas to you all!

THE OTHERS. Merry Christmas!

MISS GREGG. I—that is, I—have n't learned their names yet. This is a sort of—well, a sort of surprise party—though every one is very welcome.

MR. WATKINS. A surprise party?

KRUMM. It vas pecause I pin so lonesome alreaty yet,

sewing mit my neetles py der dailor shop. Dis goot laty dells me as I pin lonesome I shall come haf Christmas mit her.

MRS. HINKS [*in surprise*]. Why, I was the lonely one who was asked to come!

MARY. But, really, I thought it was I who was invited!

HIRAM. Wal, hang me fer a horse-thief ef I did n' think *I* wuz the feller that wuz meant!

MISS GREGG. I think it is very nice to have so many here and I hope we shall have a merry time. [*Sits as she motions to* MR. WATKINS *to be seated.*]

KATIE. An' we 'll have somethin' good ter eat, ef I do say it ez did the cookin'. [*Knock is heard.*] Lan' suz! I bet somebody else has come. [*Exit.*]

HIRAM [*aside to* MARY]. I 'm havin' the time o' my life!

Reënter KATIE, *followed by* BOBBY.

KATIE. He 's come ter the Christmas party. [*Giggles, then hurries off.*]

BOBBY [*bashfully*]. Merry Christmas! I read in de paper how de one whut wuz lonely should come here an' I s'posed de man whut wuz doin' it would n' keer ef I come.

MR. WATKINS [*heartily, rising*]. That 's all right, sonny! We 're glad you 've come. I 'm just waiting for a chance to help somebody have a merry Christmas and you 're about the right size. [*Gives* BOBBY *a seat.*] What 's your name, my boy?

BOBBY [*to* MR. WATKINS]. My name 's Bob, sir. Say, mister, d' ye s'pose Santy Claus 'll be roun' here terday?

MR. WATKINS. Well, if the old fellow himself can't give us a call, some of his helpers will. You know Santa Claus is pretty busy, but he has lots of workers. But

I know Katie needs you to help her get dinner ready. Run out to the kitchen and see if she does n't.

BOBBY. Sure ting! [*Aside*] Mebbe she 'll gimme a hand-out on de side. [*Exit.*]

MR. WATKINS. Now, friends, let 's make this a really merry Christmas! What shall we do?

KRUMM. Efrypodies shouldt haf a bresent.

HIRAM. Sure thing! They 's somebody I wanter give a present to. [*Looks at* MARY.]

MRS. HINKS. Oh, we ought to have a Christmas tree!

MARY. No, I think it would be nicer to have a big Christmas stocking and all put presents in it.

MR. WATKINS. That 's a capital idea!

KRUMM. Unt mit neetles I vill make such a shtocking alreaty yet so soon, if I can findt me some clot'.

MISS GREGG. Oh, I have some bright cloth that will be just the thing. Come with me and you can make the stocking at once. [*Exeunt* KRUMM *and* MISS GREGG.]

HIRAM [*to* MARY]. I don' s'pose ye 'd like the West, would ye?

MARY. Oh, no, I 'm sure not!

HIRAM [*aside*]. Blame the luck! I wuz hopin' she 'd say "yes"! But nobody never does take a fancy ter me, nohow.

MARY. You see, I 'm so dreadfully afraid of Indians.

HIRAM. Injuns! Wy, they ain't none o' *them* 'roun' where I live! I 'm the nearest to a savage they is there.

MARY. Oh, I think you 're real nice! I do, indeed!

HIRAM. Do ye, truly? [*Aside*] Now, ain't she the sweetest gal!

Enter MISS GREGG *with* PRISCILLA, BUNCH, *and* SLIM (*and others for entertainment if desired*).

MISS GREGG. Some of my neighbors have come to wish

us a merry Christmas and give us a little entertainment. [*Company rises.*]

EVERYBODY [*heartily.*] Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!

PRISCILLA. I kin sing a song.

MR. WATKINS. Good! I want to hear it!

PRISCILLA. But I don' sing it 'less folks gimme some candy or sump'n.

HIRAM. Wal, ye spoke jes in time! There 's a big box uv it on the table! So sing away.

MRS. HINKS [*to Priscilla*]. What is your name, child?

PRISCILLA. My name 's Priscilla, but folks call me "Cilly" fer short.

BUNCH. An' she's silly, too, you bet!

PRISCILLA. I 'm not, Bunch, you horrid boy! [*Makes a face at him.*]

MARY. Oh, please sing the song!

PRISCILLA. Oh, I 'm 'fraid ter! [*Backs off and sits down.*]

HIRAM. Wal, ef ye don' want the candy, all right.

PRISCILLA [*coming forward quickly*]. But I *do* want it!

MR. WATKINS. Then sing us a song.

PRISCILLA [*one finger in mouth and twisting skirt with other hand*]. Oh, I—don'—wanter!

SLIM. Oh, ye 'fraid cat, you!

PRISCILLA. I *ain't* a 'fraid cat, you, Slim, an' I 'll fight ye when we git outdoors, I will! [*Shakes fist at* SLIM, *who hides behind* MR. WATKINS.] I 'm goin' ter sing now, if ye 'll all promise not ter listen.

MR. WATKINS. Oh, pshaw, who wants to listen?

PRISCILLA. All right. [*Sings to tune of "Old Oaken Bucket"*]

> I want to see Santa and ask him the reason
> For some of the sorrow that he has caused me;
> I want to know why 't is, at this merry season.

My once happy heart now so troubled should be.
Why did n't he bring me a big brown-eyed dolly,
Instead of that stupid old book that I hate?
I wanted a bracelet just like he brought Mollie,
And also some roller skates, so I could skate.
I want him to tell me why such luck befell me;
I want him to tell me why he slighted *me*!

I want to see Santa and tell him I 'm huffy;
I don't like the mittens he brought me, one bit.
I wanted some furs, all so white, soft and fluffy,
I wanted blue ribbons; brown gives me a fit!
I wanted some chocolates so melting and creamy,
Instead of that horrid old peppermint stick;
I wanted a ring and a music-box dreamy,
My great disappointment has 'most made me sick.
I want to see Santa, I want him to tell me
Why, when I 'm so very good, he 's slighted *me!*

[*Makes low bow and sits. Others clap vigorously.*]

MISS GREGG. Don't feel badly, Priscilla. All of us sometimes get things we don't want and often don't get the ones we do want; but it is the Christmas spirit that makes Christmas—not what we get.

MARY. Christmas is perfectly lovely!

BUNCH. Well, ain't nobody goin' ter ask Slim and me ter sing our song?

MRS. HINKS. Oh, please do sing it!

HIRAM. Come, be sports!

SLIM. Well, come on, Bunch, let 's hurry an' git it over with. [*They stand side by side and sing.*]

BUNCH *and* SLIM [*to tune of "Maryland! My Maryland!"*]

We bring a greeting bright and gay—

[SLIM, *pointing*]

He is Bunch and I am Slim—

[*Together*]

Upon this Merry Christmas Day—

[BUNCH, *pointing*]
I am Bunch and he is Slim.

[*Together*]
We hope you all will happy be,
Enjoying Christmas revelry;
May you from sorrow all be free
Is the wish of Bunch and Slim.

Each of us is a good young lad—
[SLIM, *pointing*]
He is Bunch and I am Slim—
[*Together*]
We always mind our ma and dad—
[BUNCH, *pointing*]
I am Bunch and he is Slim.
[*Together*]
And when the Christmas Day draws nigh
To be angelic then we try,
So Santa will not pass us by—
Oh, very good are Bunch and Slim!

We bring the water and the wood—
[SLIM, *pointing*]
He is Bunch and I am Slim—
[*Together*]
We mind our teacher and are good—
[BUNCH, *pointing*]
I am Bunch and he is Slim.
[*Together*]
We do no naughty deeds, for fear
Of them old Santa Claus may hear;
Then in our socks no gifts this year
He will leave for Bunch and Slim.

[*Bow bashfully and sit down.*]

ALL [*clapping*]. Hurrah for Bunch and Slim!

Enter HERMANN KRUMM.

KRUMM. Ach, he iss done so kvick alreaty yet, unt so fine as you can't guess. [*Sits.*]

Enter BOBBY.

BOBBY. I don' keer ef we don' hev dinner till suppertime. I 've et sump'n awful good!

MISS GREGG. Now, let us all stand up and sing a song together, in honor of Christmas.

[*They stand in two rows, the smaller ones in front, and sing some appropriate Christmas song, or one of the old, familiar hymns.* KRUMM *sings lustily, bobbing head and marking time with hands.*]

HIRAM. Wal, ding-bust it ef this ain't more fun than a round-up!

BOBBY [*to* MISS GREGG]. Say, missus, I kin sing a song.

MARY. Do let him sing it! I 'm sure it 'll be good.

ALL. Sing it, BOBBY!

BOBBY [*to tune of "Jolly Old St. Nicholas"*].

Chickens roosin' in de coop,
Moon up in de sky,
Snow a layin' on de groun'
Wind a-moanin' by;
Taters crowded in de bin,
Apples ripe an' red,
Little chilluns fas' asleep
In de cozy bed.

Stockin's hangin' on de wall,
Cookies in de pan,
Santy Claus a-drawin' nigh—
Oh, de nice ol' man!
Bringin' lots o' pritty gifts
Fo' de girls an' boys,
Candy nuff ter make ye sick—
Oh, de Christmas joys!

[*All clap and some cry, "That 's fine!" "Good!" etc. If desired, another song may be sung by all the company. If others are to help with the entertainment,*

they should do so now, either with songs or Christmas recitations.]

HIRAM. Now we 'd oughter play a game.

MISS GREGG. I think dinner is almost ready.

BOBBY [*smacking lips*]. Yum-yum-yum! we 're goin' ter hev sump'n lickin' good fer dinner!

KRUMM. Led us blay shust von game, ain'dt it, to make us merry on der Christmas Tay.

MRS. HINKS. We must play Blind Man's Buff. Who has a large handkerchief? [KRUMM *pulls out a large bright bandana and she binds his eyes with it. The handkerchief must be fixed so he can see. He stands in center of stage and tries to catch the others, who keep out of his way, some falling down on the floor and in other ways making the scene as merry as possible. Then with a quick move* KRUMM *turns and throws both arms around* MISS GREGG'S *waist.*]

MISS GREGG. Oh, oh, oh! [*Screams.*] Oh, how terrible, *terrible!*

KRUMM [*holding her fast*]. Voss ist? Are you hurted?

MISS GREGG [*in great distress*]. Oh, let me go! Let me go! [*He releases her.*] Oh, Katie, Katie! [*Puts hands over face and leans back against* MR. WATKINS, *who puts arm around her.*] Oh, my! Oh, my!

MR. WATKINS. What is it, Susan? Are you sick? [*She looks at him in horror and pulls away from him.*]

Enter KATIE *hurriedly.*

KATIE. What 'n the name o' goodness is this racket about? Whut 's the matter, ma'am?

MISS GREGG [*falling against* KATIE]. Oh, he had his *arm around* me! *Two of them did!* Oh, oh, and I a modest, unmarried lady!

KATIE. Lan' suz, ma'am, that ain't hurt ye none! Lots

o' men 's had their arms 'roun' me an' I 'm still here ter tell about it.

HIRAM. Now I make a motion that some uv us goes down ter the corner store arter them things Santy Claus lef' fer us. I noticed when I come along 't wuz open.

MR. WATKINS. Yes, we must have some presents for our Christmas stocking.

KRUMM. I gifs you some monies. You puys vot you tinks goot unt I vill up der shtocking hang. [*Gives* MR. WATKINS *money and goes out.*]

MRS. HINKS. I want to give some.

MARY. And I.

[*Various ones give money to* HIRAM *and* MR. WATKINS, *who exeunt.*]

KATIE. Some o' you ladies kin help me finish gittin' dinner on the table, now.

MARY. Oh, I 'd love to! [KATIE, MRS. HINKS *and* MARY *exeunt.*]

[KRUMM *enters with large bright stocking, at least five feet long, which he and* MISS GREGG *nail firmly to wall, while rest of company move about or stand in groups, talking in asides. Children open box of candy and sit about eating it.*]

MISS GREGG. I think it is well fastened up now.

KRUMM. Ya, he von't preak town alreaty yet so soon.

Enter KATIE.

KATIE. Well, ef the men ain't come back with their arms full o' presents! We 've got 'em all out in the dinin' room an' we 're goin' ter serve 'em with the dinner an' not use the stockin', after all. Mr. Watkins says it 'll be more fun, an' dinner 's ready an' everybody come.

[*All hurry out. Off stage such exclamations as "Oh,*

how lovely!" "My, ain't this pretty!" etc., are heard, and then clatter of dishes and rattle of knives and forks against plates.]

Enter BOBBY.

BOBBY. I can't eat no more; I et too much beforehand. Say, dis is de bes' time I ever hed in my life! Gee, I wisht I could stay here an' live wid dat lady! She ain't got no little boy an' she needs me. [*Looks at stocking on wall and starts.*] Say, I jes wonder ef she would n' keep me ef I 's ter hide in dat stockin' an' tell 'er I wuz a Christmas present! I 'd like ter be somebody's boy, I would! I 'm goin' ter try it. [*Pushes a chair up to stocking and tries to climb into latter, but can't reach top.*] I know whut I 'll do. 'T won't hurt nothin' ef I rip a hole in it, at the bottom. [*Pretending to pull stitches out, crawls in at hole left at back of stocking.*]

Enter MR. WATKINS.

MR. WATKINS. What a shame that that stocking cannot be properly used to give Miss Susan the Christmas gift she needs—a husband! I have wanted for a long time to ask her to marry me, but she—I—lose my nerve. I 'm not much of a hand at proposing. Now, if I hide behind that stocking and stay till she finds me, maybe she 'll take me as a Christmas gift. [*Goes to stocking and discovers* BOBBY.] Great Scott! what 's this?

BOBBY [*from stocking*]. I 'm a Christmas gif' fer dat lady. I 'm goin' ter stay here, too. I got here fust.

MR. WATKINS. Well, by all that 's good! See here, son, maybe she 'll take both of us! She can make a home for you and me and I 'll take care of you both. That will suit me, all right. If she 'll adopt me I 'll adopt

you. We 'll see what she says. [MR. WATKINS *hides behind stocking, as sounds of leave-taking come from off stage.*]

Enter MISS GREGG.

MISS GREGG. Well, it has been a lovely day! Every one had a fine time. But now that they are gone I am so lonely I don't know what to do. [*Thoughtfully*] I wish I had a—had—some—family. Well, I may as well take this stocking down. [*Goes to it and discovers* MR. WATKINS *and* BOBBY. *Latter rolls out on floor.*]

MISS GREGG [*starting back in amazement*]. Oh, my—mercy me! What does this mean?

BOBBY. We 's yer Christmas present, lady! Don't ye want us?

MR. WATKINS. Won't you take us both, Susan? [*He kneels in front of her and* BOBBY *scrambles up and kneels beside him. Red light is turned on for a tableau.* MR. WATKINS *and* BOBBY *put up hands imploringly.* MISS GREGG *hesitates, then smiling at them, extends a hand to each.*]

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